

FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

Nutrition Update

MARCH 2005

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- The FSNE Systems Review web-based survey of State food stamp agencies and nutrition education providers begins in April 2005.
- The Early Bird Registration Deadline for the FNS National Nutrition Education Conference 2 is April 30.

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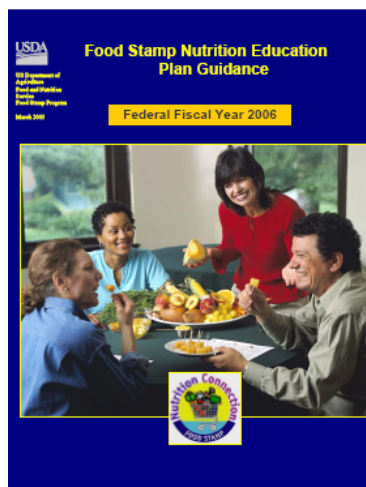
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FY 2006 FSNE Plan Guidance Released!

On March 30, FNS released the Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE) Plan Guidance. This document provides policy regarding the operation of FSNE in States, including plan and final report requirements and reimbursable costs.

The FY 2006 Guidance incorporates policy clarifications and reflects the new Dietary Guidelines for Americans (January 2005) and the forthcoming USDA Food Guidance System. These changes include the use of the term "Food Stamp Program



New Guidance Helps States Prepare Plans for FY 2006.

eligibles" rather than "Food Stamp Program participants and applicants" when referring to the intended FSNE target audience.

FNS has defined the term food stamp eligibles and provided an updated section on targeting FSNE activities to this audience.

The FY 2006 Guidance does not incorporate any principles specific to the draft FSNE Framework that was posted for public comment during FY 2004.

The FY 2006 Guidance is available on the Food Stamp Nutrition Connection web site under the "National FSNE" tab: www.nal.usda.gov/foodstamp.

Changes from FY 2005 are highlighted in yellow.

FNS Puts EARS To The Ground

Development of the new food stamp Education and Administrative Reporting System (EARS) is well under way! EARS field testing started in October 2004 and is nearing completion. Our thanks to the States that participated in the field test: Kansas, West Virginia, Illinois, New York, New Mexico and California.

The field test includes four

phases: 1) information gathering and consultation, 2) data collection using the EARS form, 3) follow-up surveys, and 4) exit consultation. Results of data collected in phase two are now being compiled by the FNS contractor, ORC Macro. During the next few months, FNS and the contractor will conduct exit consultations with participating States to improve our understanding

of the experience and the data collection process. The EARS workgroup will review the results of the field test this spring and make final recommendations to FNS early this summer regarding the structure of EARS as well as the implementation process and timeline.

The purpose of EARS is to secure uniform data that

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View the latest draft of the EARS reporting form on the Food Stamp Nutrition Connection at: www.nal.usda.gov/foodstamp/

FNS Puts EARS To The Ground

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describes nutrition education activities funded by the Food Stamp Program. The data collected will inform management decisions, support policy initiatives, and provide a source of uniform information for legislative, budget and other requests. It will also support planning within the agency.

FNS is committed to making the developmental process for EARS as transparent and open as possible. If you have not reviewed the EARS form and related definitions, we

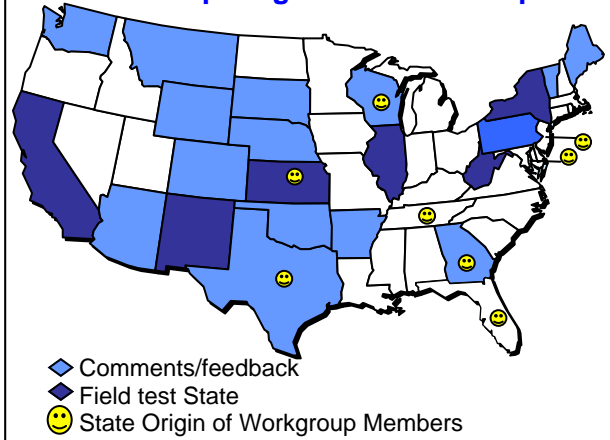
invite you to take a look now. The draft form is online at: www.nal.usda.gov/foodstamp/.

Send your comments to the EARS workgroup member representing your organization (see below) with a copy to

FNS, attention:

Judy Wilson, MSPH, RD
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NSS Office of Analysis
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States Participating in EARS Development



Meet the EARS Workgroup

FNS structured the EARS workgroup to ensure representation from Federal, State, and local levels, as well as academia and other partners. The workgroup includes staff FNS and the Centers for Disease Control; Texas, Maryland, and Tennessee Food Stamp Program offices; Florida State and Morgan State Universities; Kansas, Georgia, and New Jersey Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE) implementation agencies; and a local FSNE implementation agency in Wisconsin. The list of EARS workgroup members is online at: www.nal.usda.gov/foodstamp/National_FSNE.html.

The group, which began work in November 2003, is charged with the development of the data collection form and procedures. A key function of workgroup members is to secure comments and input from the stakeholders they represent. Throughout the EARS development process, members have solicited comments on the draft versions of the EARS reporting form from colleagues, stakeholders and partners. Feedback methods have included phone interviews, consultations with select implementing agencies and mock data collection exercises. To date, these efforts have generated input on EARS from nearly half of all States.

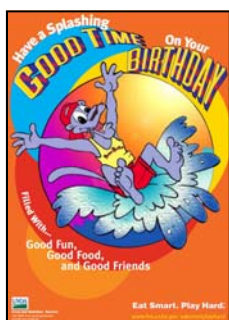


New Materials from Eat Smart. Play Hard.™

www.fns.usda.gov/leatsmartplayhard

Check out these free new materials on the Eat Smart. Play Hard.™ web site.

E-cards and Emoticons

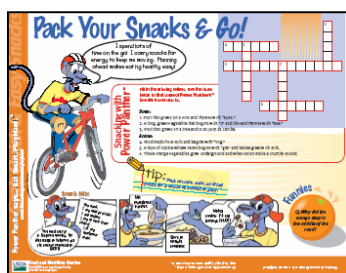


Send an E-card!

Jazz up messages to family, friends and co-workers and support their efforts to eat better and be more active by using animated Power Panther™ emoticons that show it can be fun to Eat Smart. Play Hard.™ Choose from a fun selection of e-cards that include birthday, holiday, get well, congratulations, and others.

Kids' Activity Sheets

This series of six activity sheets for 8-10 year olds engage and inform kids using interactive games and puzzles, and kid-friendly recipes, jokes and tips that focus on snacking, breakfast, physical activity, and balancing food and play. Use these sheets as part of nutrition education sessions



Get 6 new activity sheets with summer, winter and western themes.

in school, childcare and recreational programs, and as take-home incentives.

Power Panther Images

The Eat Smart. Play Hard.™ spokescharacter, Power Panther™, has been created in new poses that depict healthy eating and physical activity. These images can be used in variety of ways in presentations, reports, and educational materials.



Download new images.

The Food Stamp Nutrition Connection has regular updates on new materials: www.nal.usda.gov/foodstamp.

Celebrate Excellence. Yours!

Nominate yourself or your colleagues for the Leadership, Innovation, and Nutrition Collaboration (LINC) Awards as part of the Second FNS National Nutrition Education Conference, "Nutrition Connections: People, Programs, Science, Community." The conference will be held on September 12-14, 2005 at the Hyatt Regency, Crystal City in Arlington, Virginia.

The deadline for submitting your nomination is May 2, 2005. Don't miss out on a chance to get the recognition your project deserves.

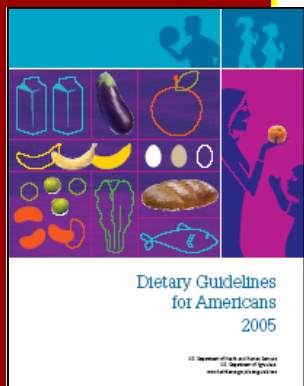
Categories for this year's awards are:

1. Partnerships and Collaborations: Synergy for Excellence
2. Nourishing Tomorrow's Nutrition Leaders and Practitioners
3. Excellence in Practice

Visit the conference web site:

www.fns.usda.gov/nutritionconference





View the new
Dietary Guidelines at:
www.cnpp.usda.gov

The New Dietary Guidelines for Americans

The 2005 edition of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, published jointly by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), was released on January 12.

These Guidelines are the basis of Federal nutrition assistance programs, including Food Stamp

Nutrition Education (FSNE) efforts. As a result of the release of the Guidelines, USDA is:

- Reviewing the Thrifty Food Plan, a market basket of foods used to determine food stamp household benefit levels.
- Developing new Food Stamp Nutrition Education materials for low-literate and Spanish language audiences and older adults that will be consistent with the new Guidelines.
- Continuing to help FSNE providers find up-to-date nutrition information and educational materials through the Food Stamp Nutrition Connection.

Research Tools to Support Science-based Nutrition Education

“Later this year, FNS will provide a concise statement of principles for conducting sound impact assessments...”

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is working on three research tools to facilitate sound decisions regarding nutrition education:

Principles of Strong Impact Evaluation

Later this year, FNS will provide a concise statement of principles for conducting sound impact assessments of nutrition education.

These principles will connect to guides on implementing impact evaluations in public program settings. The purpose of this tool is to encourage a rigorous and consistent body of evaluation research for nutrition education

activities across all FNS programs.

Review of Research on Message Type and Dosage

A review of research completed during the last decade will serve as the foundation for preparing user-friendly summaries on the impact of different message types (i.e., tailored vs. general messages and positive vs. negative message content), as well as intervention dosage or intensity. Information will come from publications in peer-reviewed journals and be supplemented by relevant state/federal reports. Summaries will be available in the Fall of 2005.

Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE) Outcome Measure

FNS is collaborating with the Economic Research Service (ERS) and the Society for Nutrition Education to develop a meaningful and sound instrument for assessing FSNE outcomes. An initial pool of survey items and a protocol for cognitive testing have been developed to date. Next, a series of in-depth interviews with persons from the target population will help determine the clarity and significance of the proposed items. FNS is contributing staff and funding resources to support this cognitive testing.

